DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 293 016 CG 020 663

AUTHOR Phillips, Martha H.
TITLE It's Time To Know about Teen Pregnancy.
PUB DATE 16 Nov 87
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Council on Family Relations (49th, Atlanta, GA, November 14-19, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; Decision Making; *Early Parenthood; High Risk Persons; Interpersonal Communication; *Peer Counseling; *Pregnancy; *Prevention; *Program Effectiveness; Secondary Education; Secondary School Students; Sexuality; Student Leadership
IDENTIFIERS South Carolina (Cherokee County)

ABSTRACT

This report describes "Time To Know about Teen Pregnancy," an educational intervention program implemented in 1985 in the junior and senior high schools in Cherokee County, South Carolina by the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service. It provides an overview of the problem of adolescent pregnancy in South Carolina and describes the demographics of the county population being reached by the program. Six objectives of the program are listed: (1) to reduce the occurrence of pregnancies among teenagers; (2) to encourage teenagers to postpone sexual intercourse; (3) to increase decision-making skills; (4) to improve interpersonal communication skills; (5) to increase knowledge of the social, health, and economic risks associated with teenage pregnancy; and (6) to develop leadership skills that create an atmosphere of positive peer influence. The training of students as peer counselors is described and methods and materials used to implement the program and introduce it to the students are discussed. Following program implementation, reports from school principals and teachers showed an increased awareness and openness to the teenage pregnancy problem. Parents reported that adolescents had approached them and encouraged family discussions. The family planning clinic at the county health department reported an increase in the number of teenagers seeking assistance. The next goal of the program is the organization of a community Teen Pregnancy Prevention Council. (NB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Fam. Life 4-3

ED293016

SESSION: Monday, November 16, 2:00-3:45, Session A

TITLE: Sexuality and Education

PRESIDER: Margaret Torrie

RECORDER: Basil Fiorito

PRESENTERS & TITLES:

It's Time To KNOW About Teen Pregnancy

Martha H. Phillips

The Mystique of First Intercourse Among High School and College Youth: Guilt, Satisfaction, and Contraceptive Practices

J. Kenneth Davidson, Sr., Carol A. Darling & Lauren C. Passarello

Parent Communication Style and Adolescent Sexual Behavior

Colleen J. MacDougall & Dr. Nancy L. Hurlbut

Sex Knowledge Among Selected University Students

Kaye B. Sears & Donna Loutzenhiser

Adolescent Sexuality and Pregnancy: Informing the Parents

Loretta Pinkard Prater

CG020663

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Martha H. Phillips
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Brief Biographical Data

Name: Martha H. Phillips

Employment: Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service, 15 years
Currently County Extension Agent in Cherokee County

Education: B.S., Home Economics, Limestone College
M.Ed., Counseling, Clemson University

Honors: "Outstanding Home Economist of the Year" for the Piedmont District by the South Carolina Association of Extension Home Economists. 1979.

"Outstanding Young Women of America" award. 1977.

"Young Career Woman" award for Spartanburg County. 1976.

State Communications Award by the South Carolina Association of Extension Home Economists. 1974.

Selected one of fifty participants in National Executive Development Institute. 1987.

Professional Affiliations:

Present:

(SCAE4-HA) South Carolina Association of Extension 4-H Agents.
Member, 1982 to Present
Newsletter Editor, 1983-85
President-Elect, 1985-1987

(NAE4-HA) National Association of Extension 4-H Agents
Member, 1982 to Present
Junior Editor, News & Views 1986
Senior Editor, News & Views 1987, 1988

Epsilon Sigma Phi
Member, 1980 to present

American Lung Association of South Carolina
Broad River Advisory Board Member
1984 to present
Nominating Committee Chairman, 1984
Program Committee, 1985
State Planning Committee, 1985
Board of Directors, 1987

Cherokee County Social and Health
Organizations Council
Secretary, 1979
Project Committee, 1980 and 1981
Vice-Chairman, 1983
Chairman, 1984 and 1986, (two terms)
Chairman for Healthy Mother/Healthy Baby
Network

South Carolina Nutrition Council
1975 - present
Executive Board 1986-1988

TIME TO kNOw ABOUT TEEN PREGNANCY

BY: Martha H. Phillips, Clemson Extension Agent

Last year in South Carolina alone, over 5,000 teenagers gave birth, continuing a cyclic epidemic--children having children. Economically it is devastating to the taxpayer. South Carolina taxpayers spend over $26.5 million annually to support these teens. It is projected that $126.9 million is the ten year costs.

Babies born to teens later perform poorer in school, exhibit lower IQ scores, and contribute to 80% of the high school dropout rate, thus trapping successive generations in low levels of educational poverty.

The factors contributing to teenage pregnancy are many and include socio-economic, family, cultural, and educational components. In this paper, I will report the success of an educational intervention program, employing multiple strategies. It was implemented in the junior and senior high schools by Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service in Cherokee County with assistance from several other local health agencies.

The program, "Time to kNOw About Teen Pregnancy," was begun in 1985 and will continue with modifications largely respective to role responsibility. Demographically, the county population can be characterized as rural, lower blue

collar textile workers. Thirty-three and nine tenths percent of the population are functional illiterates and only 8.9% are professional level workers. According to the 1980 census, 80% are white and 20% are black with a fairly equal male/female ratio. Cherokee County ranks among the top 5% of 46 South Carolina counties in regard to estimated pregnancy rate for females aged 14-17 years per 1000 female population. Over 25% of all births are to teenagers.

Objectives for the program include:

1. To reduce over an extended period of time, the occurence of pregnancies among teenagers,
2. To encourage teenagers to postpone sexual intercourse,
3. To increase decision-making skills,
4. To improve interpersonal communication skills,
5. To increase knowledge of the social, health and economic risks associated with teen pregnancy,
6. To develop leadership skills that create an atmosphere of positive peer influence.

The achievement of these objectives is resulted first through the training of peer counselors. Four teens (male/female, black/white) from each grade level 7-12, were selected by the schools to serve as Peer Counselors. These teens completed a mandatory training session and acquired knowledge and skills regarding risks of teen pregnancy, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, reproductive

anatomy/physiology, decision-making processes, legal issues and interpersonal communication. Professional resource people comprised the training team. These trained peer counselors were charged with the responsibility of teaching peers the risks associated with teen pregnancy, reliable available resources, and how to say no to sexual involvement. They also developed specific program plans for their respective schools to be implemented during a Teen Pregnancy Awareness week as well as on-going activities.

The initial program component available to all students was an essay contest utilizing the theme, "What Can We Do About the Problem with Teen Pregnancy in Cherokee County." Students were motivated to participate by offering plaques to each school winner and a $50 savings bond to the grand prize winner. The local newspaper was secured as sponsoring donor.

During the Teen Pregnancy Awareness Week designated at each school, all students attended two assembly programs. The first program was designed to make students aware of the social, health and economic risks associated with teen pregnancy. It also taught the participants responsible decision-making and how to be assertive.

The second assembly program focused on the boy's role and responsibility, sexually transmitted diseases and responsible decision-making.

Throughout the week, information was available regarding teen pregnancy. One thousand campaign buttons with the logo, "I'm in the Teen Pregnancy kNOw," were distributed by the peer counselors to students who interacted with them during the week. These were sponsored by the county hospital.

A learning center was set up at each school and provided a place where teens could pick up information leaflets on a wide range of sexuality topics. The exhibit taught teens how to handle the most commonly used sex lines.

Methods and materials for the program included films, videos, question-answer sessions, information leaflets, learning centers, bulletin boards and posters.

It utilized teens teaching teens as well as professionals teaching/counseling teens. The teens were encouraged to talk with their parents and other qualified adults such as teachers and school guidance counselors.

Results

This program helped make the community aware of the problem. The newspaper sponsoring the essay contest was asked to take an active role. They were responsible for developing contest rules, judging (along with other health professionals), advertising the contest and printing the winning essays. They also were asked to give coverage on the total program.

Other local businesses were asked to financially sponsor program costs, i.e., campaign buttons, lunch for peer counselor training, essay awards. Radio stations also gave coverage.

Peer counselors were given pre and post tests at their training session. There was an overall gain of 30% on the scores. All peer counselors were required to score at least 75% on the test. Those falling short were not allowed to participate in the role. Fifty-three successfully completed the training.

Twenty-nine essays were completed from the five participating schools. At some schools, teachers encouraged participation by giving extra grade credit to those who completed an essay. The newspaper published the five winning entries in entirety and included an article on the program.

Peer counselors gave pre and post program tests to a sampling of students. These students showed a 20% gain after the Teen Pregnancy Awareness Week. They also gave buttons to nearly 1000 students who could successfully respond to teen pressure lines typically used in sexual encounters.

Reports from school principals and teachers showed an increased awareness and openness to the teen pregnancy problem. Parents reported that teens had approached them

and encouraged family discussions. The Family Planning Clinic at the County Health Department reported an increase in the number of teens seeking assistance.

These evaluation results were aimed at determining program effectiveness and are not for research data.

Our next goal is to organize a community Teen Pregnancy Prevention Council. County key leaders and residences will comprise its membership so that this group can assume ownership for the problem and become active in efforts aimed at prevention. Hopefully, then, we can see results with our first objective--To reduce, over an extended period of time, the occurences of pregnancies among teenagers.

Presented:

National Council on Family Relations Conference
Sexuality and Education Session

Atlanta, Georgia

Monday, November 16, 1987